

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAKAR 06359 081143Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2818

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, SG

SUBJ: CIVAIR DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: VISIT OF FAA DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR BENNET AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL ALLOWED US TO REVIEW QUESTIONS RELATING TO US CIVIL AVIATION INTERESTS WITH LOCAL SENEGALESE AND MULTIREGIONAL AUTHORITIES STATIONED IN SENEGAL. THIS MSG PRESENTS WRAP-UP OF VARIOUS POINTS COVERED DURING DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ASECNA. ORGANIZATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE OF AIRPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS IN 14 AFRICAN COUNTRIES. IN PAST IT WAS ADMINISTERED AS FORM OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY BRANCE TO FORMER COLONIES. IN RECENT YEARS PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN AFRICANIZED AND FRENCH CONTRIBUTION IN MONEY HAS BEEN GRADUALLY PHASED DOWN. THIS HAS GIVEN RISE TO TWO PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE PLACED CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF ORGANIZATION IN DOUBT: LATENT NATIONALIST TENSIONS WITHIN AESECNA AND DETERIORATING FINANCIAL POSITION. LATTER RESULTS FROM FAILURE OF MEMBER STATES AND THEIR FLAG CARRIERS TO COME UP WITH SOME CFA 3.5 BILLION (US DOL 160 MILLION) OWED ASECNA FOR SERVICES RENDERED. ASECNA EXECUTIVES HAVE EMBARKED ON

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PAGE 02 DAKAR 06359 081143Z

CAMPAIGN TO COLLECT ARREARAGES. IF THIS CAMPAIGN FAILS, THEY WILL BE

FACED WITH FOUR UNPLEASANT COURSES OF ACTION, OR COMBINATION THEREOF; INCREASE IN ALREADY HIGH FEES, SERVICE CUTBACKS, SUSPENSION OF DELINQUENT STATES, OR APPEAL TO THE FRENCH. WHILE FACING THESE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, THERE HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN INCREASING NATIONALIST TENSIONS AT DAKAR HEADQUARTERS AMONG RECENTLY APPOINTED AFRICAN STAFF. EVANTUAL EFFECTS, IF RESOLUTION IS NOT FOUND, WILL BE DETERIORATION OF EXCELLENT FLIGHT SERVICE CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY ASECNA; NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF JUST-RELEASED FIVE-YEAR-PLAN, AND RELUCTANCE OF NON-ASECNA STATES TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO JOIN WHICH WAS INCORPORATED IN 1974 CHARTER.

2. CAFAC (COMMISSION AFRICAINE DE L'AVIATION CIVILE):

ORGANIZED IN 1969 WITH ASSISTANCE FROM OAUM ICAO AND UN ECONOMIC

COMMISSION FOR AFRICA, CAFAC HAS BEEN STUDYING WAYS TO IMPROVE INTER-AFRICAN COOPERATION IN FIELD OF AIR TRANSPORT. SPECIFIC AREAS HAVE BEEN STUDIED, SUCH AS TRAINING, JOINT PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT, RATIONALIZING ROUTE STRUCTURES, AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION. HOWEVER, LITTLE ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF UNWILLINGNESS OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO MAKE NECESSARY COMPROMISES.

3. AIRPORT SECURITY: IT IS AGREED ON ALL SIDES THAT SECURITY AT DAKAR AIRPORT COULD BE IMPROVED. ALTHOUGH BUILDING ITSELF IS WELL GUARDED AND THERE IS ELECTRONIC SCREENING DEVICE FOR U.S.-BOUND PASSENGERS, ENTIRE AREA SURROUNDING AIRPORT IS UNGUARDED. ASECNA AND SENEGALESE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES HAVE AGREED TO CONSTRUCT FENCE AROUND AIRPORT IN 1976, BUT IN VIEW OF PAUCITY OF RESOURCES, IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT FENCE WILL EVER MATERIALIZE. OVERALL, SENEGALESE DO NOT HAVE CASUAL ATTITUDE TOWARD SECURITY. HOWEVER, AS IN OTHER PLACES, NECESSARY ACTION TO IMPROVE SEUCIRTY MAY BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER SOME SERIOUS INCIDENT HAS OCCURRED.

4. CIVIL AVIATION BILATERAL. DEPARTMENT, THROUGH EMBASSY, HAS SENT NOTE TO GOS ANNOUCING OUR WILLINGNESS TO ENTER INTO "CONSULTATIONS" CONCERNING BILATERAL CIVIL AVIATION AGREEMENT. DISCREET LOW-LEVEL EFFORTS TO DETERMINE SENEGALESE RESPONSE TO THIS NOTE, EITHER COMPOSITION OF NEGOTIATORS OR CONTENT OF THEIR POSITION, HAVE BEEN UNAVAILING. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THEY SEEK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DAKAR 06359 081143Z

DOCUMENT CERTIFYING STATUS QUO OR WISH TO MAKE SOME CHANGES WHICH MIGHT HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS FOR ALL CONCERNED. WE ARE WAITING FOR GOS TO MAKE NEXT MOVE.

5. SALES OF PLANES AND EQUIPMENT. AT PRESENT POSSIBILITY OF SELLING EITHER AIRCRAFT OR AVIONICS TO SENEGAL ARE NOT PROMISING. ON AVIONICS, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT CERTAIN QUARTERS WITHIN ASECNA WOULD LIKE TO DIVERSIFY AWAY FROM EXCLUSIVE RELIANCE ON

FRENCH EQUIPMENT. BUT CURRENT FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES COUPLED WITH POSSIBILITY OF YET ANOTHER INFLOW OF FRENCH CAPITAL RULE THIS OUT FOR TIME BEING. IMPLEMENTATION OF FIVE YEAR PLAN IS IN ABEYANCE. SENEGALESE DOMESTIC AIRLINE, AIR-SENEGAL, RELIES ON TWO DEHAVILAND TWIN OTTERS (PURCHASED ON HIGHLY CONCESSIONAL TERMS EXTENDED BY CANADIANS) AND OTHER SMALL PLANES. THERE IS LITTLE INDICATION THAT THIS COMPANY WILL BE ABLE TO PURCHASE AIRCRAFT ON NORMAL COMMERCIAL TERMS IN NEAR FUTURE, ALTHOUGH SOME OF ITS LIGHT PLANES CERTAINLY NEED REPLACEMENT. FINALLY, PRIVATE MARKET IS COVERED BY VERY ACTIVE PIPER AIRCRAFT REPRESENTATIVE WHO HANDLES ABOUT ONE THIRD OF CONTINENT FROM DAKAR. SALES OF SMALL, LIGHT PLANES RANGE FROM TEN TO THIRTY PER YEAR IN THIS AREA, PIPER IS LOOKING FOR MORE ACTIVE DEALERS IN NIGERIA AND MOROCCO IN BELIEF THAT SALES TO THESE MARKETS ARE FAR BELOW POTENTIAL.

AGGREY

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